



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 25 May 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
25 MAY 1968

1. France

De Gaulle's announcement of a referendum on reforms has not eased things--the immediate situation remains tense and ugly. Rioting has been reported this morning in Paris and in large provincial cities as well. The police are getting tougher, and troops have been placed on alert.

French labor unions reacted to De Gaulle's statement by urging strikers to increase pressure on the government. The strike scene is likely to improve only if the government comes forward with concrete reform proposals during crucial negotiations with labor and business leaders today.

The interior minister, one of the key targets of student-labor unrest, may be looking for someone else to pin his troubles on. He apparently is considering a white paper that would make what Ambassador Shriver calls the "traditional" accusation that CIA inspired the student uprisings. Any such document would be completely fictional--there has been absolutely no CIA involvement.

2. Czechoslovakia

The US Embassy believes the week ahead may be an important one. The Central Committee convenes Wednesday with the possibility of a showdown between contending factions.

Kosygin returned to Prague yesterday and may be getting ready to go back to Moscow. Just how much he actually has accomplished is uncertain--the Czechs are saying things designed to mollify the Soviets, but nothing to suggest surrender.

3. Israel

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4. Cuba-Egypt

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5. Haiti

Duvalier sees American skulduggery behind every real or rumored plot against himself. The latest invasion by exiles is no exception. He is convinced the US was involved and is determined to air his case before the UN Security Council in hopes of embarrassing Washington. Meanwhile, the remnants of the vanquished invader band are headed for the Dominican border.

6. Arab States -
Israel

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7. Communist China

The United States Intelligence Board on Thursday approved a National Intelligence Estimate, The Short-Term Outlook In Communist China. Among the conclusions reached in this estimate:

--The ranks of those alienated by Mao's Cultural Revolution have grown even though he broke the back of his high-level party opposition two years ago. The Cultural Revolution, in fact, has been a failure in most respects and has done great harm to China. In all likelihood, it will be gradually phased out.

--Over the next year or so, there will be many twists and turns, although the general trend will be toward regaining stability. The military will play a key role in efforts to rebuild the political and economic base.

--During this period, China is likely to be more preoccupied with domestic affairs than with foreign developments.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

25 May 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

"Legislature" Meets: With much fanfare, the North Vietnamese have held their first National Assembly meeting in two years. Preliminary broadcast announcements yesterday did not specify the date of the meeting, but it was the occasion for the turn-out of virtually the entire leadership and a major speech by Premier Pham Van Dong which has only begun to come in. The entire Politburo turned out, with the exception of Pham Hung and Le Duc Tho (both of whom have been out of sight for many months and may be in the South) and Le Thanh Nghi (who is on an aid mission in Europe). By special invitation of President Ho, the Liberation Front representative in Hanoi also participated on the "presidium" of the meeting "during this session."

Only preliminary reports and summaries of the speeches are available at this time. Both Assembly President Truong Chinh's opening remarks and Premier Pham Van Dong's 90-minute speech, however, appear to be focused on recent developments in the war and Hanoi's hopes for a successful conclusion of the struggle. The Premier's speech is entitled, "Forward, Total Victory Will Be Ours" and has three major divisions: the war in the South, the war in the North, and foreign support. The early summaries indicate that the Communists are telling their people that final victory is within their grasp if they will mobilize for one last push. In reference to the Paris talks, the Premier apparently used a hard line on the issue of reciprocity. At the regular news briefing by the North Vietnamese delegation in Paris yesterday, however, the North Vietnamese spokesman opened the briefing by assuring the newsmen that the Premier's speech did not convey any intention to break off the talks.

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Hanoi Fetes Visiting American Negro Communist:
Hanoi announced in its English language broadcast on 23 May that James Jackson, described as a "leader of

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the US Communist Party," was in North Vietnam at the invitation of the Vietnam Journalist Association. The broadcast noted that Jackson was given a rare audience with President Ho Chi Minh and was received by other Hanoi government, party, and trade union officials. The broadcast also quoted Jackson as "reaffirming the support of the US Communist Party and the American people for the Vietnamese people's struggle against US aggression."

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Economic Aid: North Vietnamese Politburo member Le Thanh Nghi--Hanoi's chief economic negotiator--arrived in Budapest on 23 May, according to the Hungarian press. For the past three years Nghi has made the circuit of Communist capitals about every six months to update economic aid agreements. The last trip of this type was an extensive two-month tour in the summer of 1967. The only unusual feature of the current visit is the lack of publicity when the delegation passed through Peking and Moscow. Such visits normally start with well publicized stops in both places before the delegation goes on to other countries. The first announcement of the current tour is the stop in Budapest. Hungary makes only a token contribution of economic assistance to North Vietnam.

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Hanoi Reports on the Crisis Situation in France:
The French Press Agency correspondent in Hanoi, in a dispatch on Thursday, reported that the current crisis in France is being followed closely by the North Vietnamese. Publicly, however, the regime has adopted a cautious position. No official commentary has been made on the situation, and the first public reference to it came only in the 23 May issue of the party daily. The paper stressed the social, rather than the political aspects of the crisis, and no connection was made with the Paris talks. The correspondent claimed, however, that many North Vietnamese were anxiously wondering what impact the situation would have on the discussions.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing of significance to report .

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